Archives
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REASONS

FOR

BECOMING A BAPTIST.

BY REV. S. REMINGTON, A. M.,

LATE PASTOR OF ST. PAUL'S METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, LOWELL, MS.

ALSO,

A FAREWELL LETTER TO HIS LATE CHARGE.

"I speak as unto wise men; judge ye what I say."

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DEAR BROTHER—Believing that the reasons assigned by you for becoming a Baptist are eminently scriptural, and that their general circulation would promote the cause of truth, we, your brethren in the ministry, respectfully invite you to commit your interesting work to the press.

Affectionately yours, in the service of Christ,

LEMUEL PORTER,
IRA PERSON,
DANIEL C. EDDY,
D. BURROUGHS,
J. BALLARD.

REV. S. REMINGTON.

Lowell, March 2d, 1846.

REV. AND DEAR BRETHREN—As I desire to promote the cause of truth, and as you think the publication of my "Reasons for becoming a Baptist" may contribute to it, I therefore accede to your request,—praying that the Great Head of the Church may give it his sanction.

With great respect, Rev. brethren, I am happy to subscribe myself your fellow laborer in the best of causes,

S. REMINGTON.

REV. LEMUEL PORTER, &c.

Lowell, March 3, 1846.

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REASONS

FOR BECOMING A BAPTIST.

"Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—*Matt.* 28: 19, 20.

The word "therefore" refers to the preceding text, in which Jesus Christ asserts his authority to rule and regulate his church; to appoint his ministers, and to give them their appropiate commission, so that all their doings may be done in his name and by his authority. Hence he says—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." "Go ye therefore"—

You will observe the order of their commission—To teach, baptize, and then build up the church on her most holy faith—and his promise is to be with all such to the end of the world.

They are, then, first to teach all nations what they must do to be saved, and baptize all that believe. See Luke 16 : 15, 16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved."

Then secondly, having introduced them into the church of God by the rite of baptism, the command is—"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." By this means they are to become established Christians, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.

The main point which invites our attention upon this occasion, is Baptism.

What is the mode, and who are the proper subjects of Christian baptism? are questions upon which the Christian world have been, and still are, divided.

The Baptists tell us that believers are the only subjects, and immersion the only true mode of administering the ordinance, while Pedo-baptists contend that infants ought to be baptized, and that sprinkling, pouring, or immersion, are equally valid.

There are points, however, upon which both parties generally agree,—that baptism

is a gospel ordinance; that it is the door of admission into the visible church, and ought always to precede the sacrament of the Lord's supper; and that it should be administered to the same subject but once.

This common ground implies its importance to both parties. Though it is an external rite, and not absolutely necessary to salvation, yet being an institution of the gospel, and the visible line of separation between the world and Christ's kingdom, it is of great importance that we should observe it agreeably to its original design and intent.

It is a postive law, and hence should be observed according to its letter. There is no mending, altering, or changing the laws and institutions of Christ allowed to any of his followers, however devout and holy they may be. He is our Lord, as well as Saviour, and we must hear and obey him.

This discourse will contain a brief narration of the different steps which I took in the investigation of this subject, and the conclusions to which I arrived.

To begin—The first book which I open-

ed was the New Testament. In this book, the word baptize often occurs,—a Greek word with an English termination. To understand its meaning seemed to be the first step for me to take. I therefore had recourse to the Greek Testament which contains the original language in which it was written. Here I found the word baptizo with its noun baptisma, and participle baptizontes; the verb, called by our translators "baptize," the noun "baptism," and the participle "baptizing."

As words are the signs of our ideas, the great point with me was, to obtain the true translation of the word "baptizo;" in order to which I examined every passage in the New Testament where the word is used, and found in every place where baptism was spoken of, this was the word used by the inspired penman.

My next business was to obtain the meaning of the word baptizo, as translated by Greek lexicographers. I obtained the testimony of no less than twenty three, all of whom agree that its primary meaning is "to immerse, plunge, dip, overwhelm,"—

and a few of them give as a remote meaning, "to wash, lave, or tinge;" this, however, as a consequence, or by implication, because a thing washed, whatever may be its process, must be as wet as if immersed. Hence, Alstedius says, "it means not to wash, except by consequence."

So overwhelming is this testimony, that many learned Pedo-baptists, I found, were constrained to admit it: among whom is Professor Stuart of Andover. He says that "the words bapto and baptizo mean to dip, plunge, or immerse into any thing liquid," and that "all lexicographers and critics of any note are agreed in this." Accordingly, I sought out the opinions of a number of distinguished divines, who were acquainted with the best Greek authorities, including classic literature, and to my surprise, I found an host of witnesses who were Pedo-baptists, and yet, in spite of their creed, conceded the point.

Your attention is invited to the testimonies of a few of these witnesses.

Campbell says, "The word *baptism*, both in sacred authors and in classical, signifies

to dip, to plunge, to immerse. Had baptizo been employed in the sense of *raino*, to sprinkle, (which, as far as I know, it never is, in any use, sacred or classical,) the expression would doubtless have been, "I indeed baptize water upon you."

Beza. "Neither does the word baptizo signify to wash, unless consequently, for it properly signifies to plunge into, for the sake of tinging or dying."

John Calvin says, "The very word baptize, however, signifies to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the ancient church."

Luther. "The term baptizo is Greek, and may be rendered dipping, as when we dip any thing in water, so that it is covered all over. And although the custom be now abolished among many, (for they do not dip their children, but only pour on them a little water) yet they ought to be wholly immersed, and immediately taken out; the etymology of the word seems to require it."

Melancthon. "Baptism is an entire action, to wit, a dipping and the pronouncing these words, I baptize thee, &c."

I could quote more than a dozen additional, whose testimonies are equally explicit, but for the want of time, I will close this paragraph by giving you *Dr. Whitby's.* He says, "Baptism by immersion, is suitable both to the institution of our Lord and his apostles; and was by them ordained to represent our burial with Christ, and so our dying unto sin, and our conformity to his resurrection by newness of life."

The next thing that attracted my attention was, *the practice of the Greek church.* This church is of ancient date, and comprises at this day a large portion of the Christian world; portions of which are in the coldest latitudes in the Russian Empire. And yet immersion is their only mode, and has always been so from the beginning. Now it will be recollected that the Greek is their mother language, and it is to be supposed that they understand the popular meaning of the word baptizo, and that their practical application of that term to immersion, is an imperishable monument to its truth.

In view of these facts I inquired, Whence came the practice of sprinkling? The Greek lexicographers answer, "Not from us." The Oriental church answers, "Not from us." The Roman Catholic church answers not from the primary meaning of the word, nor from the primitive practice, which was immersion; but by authority committed to her *she changed it.* I could but wonder at the inconsistency of the Reformed churches, and their learned men, who, with the writings of the Reformers in their hands, declare, in the language of Calvin, that "the word baptize means to immerse, and it is certain that immersion was the practice of the primitive church," and yet plead for the change on the ground of expediency and convenience.

My only alternative, therefore, was either to admit the infallibility of the Papal church, and her right to change, or alter the ordinances of the gospel, or that immersion was the primitive and only scriptural baptism. Of course I must choose the latter.

By this time I considered the word fairly translated. With this translation I began

to read the scriptures.' "In those days came John the Immerser—and were all immersed of him in the river Jordan. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be immersed of him. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and immersed. Jesus made and immersed more disciples than John, though Jesus himself immersed not, but his disciples. He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved. Go ye—teach all nations, immersing them. Then Peter said Repent and be immersed, every one of you. Then they that gladly received the word were immersed." And so on.

I was led to ask myself, What, if this word had been properly rendered by the translators of our English version of the bible, would have become of sprinkling?—who of us would have practised it? As it is, nearly half of the Christian world are Baptists.

My next inquiry was, Do the scripture examples set forth immersion as essential to the ordinance? Have we any unequiv-

ocal examples of immersion, and have we any equally so of sprinkling, either direct or indirect—positive or inferential?

I found several undoubted examples of immersion recorded in the New Testament. First, John the Baptist baptized by immersion. Matt. 3 : 12. Luke 3 : 3. Acts 19 : 4. Mark 1 : 5. John 3 : 23, and Luke 7 : 29, 30. In these passages we are taught, 1. That John prepared the people for baptism by preaching. 2. That he required repentance and faith as the prerequisites for receiving the ordinance. 3. For the want of this the Lawyers and Pharisees were not baptized. 4. That his baptism was immersion. This is the common sense view of the subject. They were baptized *in* the river Jordan. The reason assigned for his baptizing at Ænon near to Salim was, because there was much water there; hence they came and were baptized. And finally, the original has but one name for the ordinance, and that is, as we have seen, immersion. "They came and were immersed."

Christ's baptism furnishes the second example of immersion. Mark 1 : 9. Matt.

3 : 16. Mark 1 : 10. Jesus was baptized, not *with* the river Jordan, but *in* it; and hence when he was baptized, went straightway out of the water.

Had the baptism of John and of Christ any thing to do with Christian baptism? was the next question which I was led to examine.

John's baptism was either under the law or the gospel dispensation. If under the former, we should expect that the law required it. But where can such a requirement be found in the law? The baptism of John was not from the law, but more recently, from heaven. Matt. 21 : 25. Luke 16 : 16, informs us that "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." By "the kingdom of God," we understand the Gospel dispensation, which, from the days of John the Baptist, was preached. This is evident from Matt. 11 : 12, 13, "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and

all the law prophesied until John." The kingdom of heaven began just where the law and the prophets ended. The law and the prophets were until John, when the new dispensation opened, and the kingdom of God was preached. Hence Mark 1:1. John's ministry is called "The beginning of the gospel of the Son of God." Mr. Benson remarks in his commentary on this text, "The gospel of Jesus Christ began, according to the prediction of the prophets, with the preaching and baptism of John the Baptist." Hence Zecharias his father declared at his birth, by the inspiration of God, that "The day spring from on high hath visited us to give light to them that sit in darkness," &c., Luke 1:78, 79. "That is," says Mr. Benson, "the Gospel dispensation is as superior to the Patriarchal, or Mosaic, with their types and shadows, as the light of the rising sun is superior to the moon and stars. This gospel day dawned in the ministry of John the Baptist, and it increased more and more during the personal ministry of Christ, and it shone out with meridian splendor on the day of Pentecost." This

view explains Matt. 11 : 11. The phrase, "He that is least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he," does not mean that he was not in that kingdom at all; but that he was only acquanted with its rudiments, while the future subjects of Christ's kingdom were destined to enjoy its privileges in its matured state.

Having therefore satisfied my mind that John's ministry was not under the law but under the gospel, I was about to conclude that his baptism was a gospel ordinance, when the thought occurred to me that some of his disciples had been rebaptized. This led me to examine the passage in Acts 19 : 1—6. These persons were undoubtedly rebaptized. But why? Was it because of any imperfection in John's baptism? I think not. But the whole passage implies that they had been baptized irregularly. For, 1. It does not appear that John himself ever baptized them. The text does not say that he did; for had he, we have reason to believe that he would have given them instruction upon those points on which they were profoundly ignorant. So ignorant

were they that they said, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost."

Now could they have attended upon the ministry of John and been so ignorant? Review John's discourses and you will see that would be impossible. To use the words of Prof. Ripley—"Their baptism, then, was an altogether ignorant and irregular transaction; it was in truth a nullity. And on this ground, doubtless, the apostles required them, having since become Christians, and having now been properly instructed, to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

The baptism of John, when regularly administered, was evidently considered by the first Christian church essentially the same with Christian baptism. Hence we do not find that any apostle, or other disciple of Jesus, was the second time baptized; not even Apollos, mentioned in Acts 18 : 25, because he had before believed in Jesus Christ, although he had recieved only the baptism of John.

This objection being obviated, my conclusion was that John's baptism was a gospel ordinance. This conclusion was, if possible, still more strongly confirmed in my mind by a reference to the fact that John and Christ were baptizing at the same time; and the strong intimation that John even baptized some of Christ's disciples. John 3 : 22—24, we read—"After these things came Jesus and his disciples in the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. And John also was baptizing in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there, and they came and were baptized; for John was not yet cast into prison."

And they came and were baptized. Who? The word "disciples" seems to be the antecedent to the pronoun "they." If so, is it not presumptive that "they"—the disciples of Christ—"came, and were baptized" by John? This appears to me more than probable.

Christ's baptism was the next subject into which I looked. I had always thought that the baptism of Jesus had nothing to do

with the Christian ordinance, supposing that he was baptized as a Priest. But here I found myself in error. Christ was not baptized as a Jewish priest, for he did not belong to the Jewish priesthood. In Heb. 7 : 14, St. Paul says, "It is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning the priesthood." Of course no statute of the Mosaic law touched the priesthood of Christ, who, verse 13, the apostle says, "pertaineth to another tribe of which no man gave attendance at the altar."

Christ's baptism, therefore, was not a Jewish ordinance. What was it, then? In Matt. 3 : 13, and in John 1 : 32, 33, we have the answer—"Thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." The term "righteousness" denotes *practical obedience.* See Luke 1 : 6.

Mark the phrase, "*thus it becometh us.*" That is, both myself and yourself; for when Christ speaks of himself alone, he always uses the singular number. Here was a duty for both John and Christ to perform. Why? It was an appointment of the Fa-

ther, that Christ should be made manifest to Israel at the time of his baptism. This fact was revealed to John by Him who had sent him to baptize. Though John knew him not, yet he knew that the *circumstances* were appointed by which he should be made known both to himself and Israel as the Messiah. John 1 : 31, 33. John says "I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."

By this account we perceive that the design of Christ's baptism was to ratify the ordinance; honoring it with his first manifestation to Israel, and thus giving it the sanction of his own example. In this manifestation of Christ to Israel, three things were evidently taught. 1. That he should baptize with the Holy Ghost. 2. That he was God's anointed; and, 3. That God approved of this act performed by him as the great Prophet, to teach both by precept and example.

From the whole my conclusions were,

that Christ was baptized under the gospel dispensation; not as a Jewish priest; not unto repentance,—for he had no sin to repent of,—but as our great Teacher and Exemplar of *practical obedience;* ratifying the ordinance, by sealing it with his own example, that all his church should follow his steps. I can see it in no other light.

My next inquiry was, What was the practice of the Apostles? Did they follow the example of Christ and go down into the water, and come up straightway out of the water, or did they sprinkle?

The first prominent example of immersion is recorded in Acts 8: 35—the baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch. The following circumstances mark this as an undoubted case of immersion. 1. The Eunuch said, Here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? 2. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch. 3. When in the water Philip baptized him. 4. After his baptism "they came up out of the water."

Dr. Doddridge remarks, "It would be very unnatural to suppose that they went

down to the water merely that Philip might take up a little water in his hand to pour on the Eunuch. A person of his dignity had no doubt many vessels in his baggage, (by which water might be brought into the chariot,) on such a journey, through a desert country; a precaution absolutely necessary for travellers in those parts, and never omitted by them."

My next business was to look at those passages which were less minute in detail, and see if by fair construction any of them favored a different mode. I turned to Acts 2d and read, "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

Two objections have been urged against the idea of the immersion of these persons. 1. The want of time in which to immerse such a multitude. 2. The want of conveniences in which to perform that rite.

With regard to the first objection, it has not been fully demonstrated that twelve men could not have performed that service "the same day." But if it were demonstra-

ted, it is not certain that these twelve men had to perform all this service, for there were seventy others who had equal authority to baptize. Add this number to the twelve, and the difficulty vanishes at once.* With regard to the second objection, there were ample conveniences in the Temple, and it does not appear that the disciples had yet been excluded from the privilege of the temple. Luke 24: 53. Besides, Jerusalem abounded in cisterns, reservoirs, fountains and pools. So abundant were they, that Dr. Robinson devotes nineteen pages, in his work on Palestine, to the supply of water in Jerusalem.† He says, "In the numerous

* Some supposes that there were one hundred and twenty administrators; if so, says Rev. L. Porter, "There would have been twenty-five candidates to each, who might easily be immersed in thirty minutes." "To twelve administrators," continues Mr. P., "there would have been two hundred and fifty candidates each, who could readily have been immersed in five hours, with time for resting. Although the administrators were sufficiently numerous and the water sufficiently abundant for the baptism of 3,000 in one day, we are not informed that 3,000 were baptized in one day. In one day 3,000 were *added to the church.— See Rev. L. Porter's Notes*, p. 121.

† In Jerusalem, baths for immersion were so numerous that the digging of cisterns, for such uses, was a trade. In the Temple there were ten brass lavers, each of which held over nine barrels of water, and the great brazen sea that contained over 500 barrels of water. There were also the pools of Siloam and Bethesda, and the brooks of Cedron and Sorek. These places were all free.— *Rev. L. Porter's Notes.*

sieges to which Jerusalem in all ages has been exposed, we no where read of a want of water within the city."

In the absence, therefore, of all evidence of sprinkling, with the examples of immersion already quoted, together with the true meaning of the word baptize, my conclusions were, that they were immersed. They were also the same with regard to the baptism of Paul. Acts 9: 17. Cornelius and his friends. Acts 10: 42. Lydia and her household. Acts 16: 13. St Paul baptizing at Corinth. Acts 18: 4.

The case of the Jailor, in Acts 16: 27, is more circumstantial, and I determined to mark every circumstance, and see on which side of the question they seemed most favorable.

1. The Jailor brought out Paul and Silas and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

What did he bring them out of? Answer. The prison. Where did he bring them to? Answer. Into his house. For it is added, "And they spake unto him the

word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."

2. When they were baptized they went out of his house, where he washed their stripes, and was baptized, he, and all his.

3. It appears that after this he "brought them into his house."

Now on the supposition that the Jailor and his household were sprinkled, I could but admit that it would have been much more convenient, at the midnight hour, for them to have remained in his house, than to have gone out. Most certainly the brief circumstances here noted are altogether on the side of immersion.

The next topics of examination were those figurative and metaphorical passages which speak of baptism.

In this examination my chief inquiry was, which do they best represent, sprinkling or immersion? I turned to Luke 12: 50. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished." "That is," says Prof. Stuart, "I am about to be overwhelmed with suf-

ferings, and I am greatly distressed with the prospect of them."

Again, Mark 10: 38, 39. Can "ye be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" That is, says Prof. Stuart, "Sufferings of an overwhelming nature."

Again, 1 Cor. 15: 29. "Else what shall they do who are baptized for the dead?" Says the same author, "of what avail is it to endure overwhelming sorrows, if there be no resurrection of the dead?"

The baptism of the Hosts of Israel unto Moses, and in the cloud, 1 Cor. 10: 1. Also, Noah and his family saved by water, "the like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us." 1 Pet. 3: 20. "The being baptized into one body," Gal. 3: 27. "Baptized into Christ," are all figurative passages drawn from, or intended to represent baptism. I cannot see that these figures could any more justify the idea of sprinkling, than a few drops of water could surround and cover hundreds of thousands at one time; or float the ark; or that a person could sink down into a few drops of water.

I concluded this paragraph by an examination of Rom. 6: 3, and Col. 2: 12. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been *planted* together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

I consider that a careful examination of this passage establishes the following. 1. That baptism is here used as a metaphor, by which to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. 2. Of the Christian's death to sin, and resurrection to spiritual life. Observe the two phrases. Buried with him *by* baptism, and buried with him *in* baptism. The one referring to the act of baptism, and the other to the state of the baptized. It is plain that

sprinkling cannot answer this figure, and nothing short of, nothing but immersion is intended by it.

My last inquiry was as to the practice of the primitive church, with regard to immersion. This inquiry is to be answered only by a reference to the testimony of historians. It so happens that we have them in great abundance.

Tertullian, the oldest of the latin fathers, says, "we die symbolically in baptism." Upon these words Rigaltius remarks, "we are immersed as if we suffered death, and rise up out of the water, as reviving again."

Chrysostom says, "to be dipped and plunged into water, and then to rise up out of it again, is a symbol of our descent into the grave, and of our ascent out of it. And therefore Paul calls baptism a burial, when he says, "we are therefore buried with him by baptism into death."

St. Barnabas says, "we go down into the water full of sins and pollution, but come up again bringing forth fruit in our hearts."

Tertullian, in his treatise on Baptism,

says, "it is all one whether we are washed in the sea, or in a pond; in a fountain, or in a river; in a standing, or in a running water; nor is there any difference between those that John baptized in Jordan, and those that Peter baptized in the Tiber."

Justin Martyr, in his apology before the Roman Emperor, says of those who dedicate themselves to God through Christ, upon their conversion, "they are brought to a place of water and washed in the name of God the Father. Moreover the person baptized and illuminated, is baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, and in the name of the Holy Ghost."

Basil, archbishop of Cæsarea, puts the following questions in his Lent sermons, to the catechumens before their baptism. "How can we be placed in a condition of likeness to his death? Answer. By being buried with him in baptism. How are we to go down with him into the grave? By imitating the burial of Christ in baptism; for the bodies of the baptized are in a sense buried in water. By three immersions we administer this important ceremony of bap-

tism, that death may be represented in a figure."

Grotius in his Annotation on Matt. 3 : 6, says, "That this rite was performed by immersion, and not by affusion, appears both by the propriety of the word, and the places chosen for its administration."

Du Pin says, "In the three first centuries, they plunged those three times in the water, whom they baptized."

Gregory, in his Ecclesiastical History, informs us that "baptism, in the primitive times, was administered by immersion."

Mosheim, speaking of the second century says, "Those adult persons that desired to be baptized, received the sacrament of baptism according to the ancient and primitive manner of celebrating that institution, even by immersion."

Eusebius, in his life of Constantine the Great, records the following speech of the dying Emperor. "This is the hour, (that is, the hour of his baptism,) wherein we may also enjoy that seal which confers immortality. I had heretofore taken a resolution of doing this in the river Jordan, where

our Saviour himself, in likeness to us, is recorded to have partaken of the laver." Sickness prevented this design, and the Emperor was baptized in the usual way, by Eusebius, in the suburbs of Nicomedia."

The truth is, sprinkling made its first appearance in the third century. In cases of sickness that would not allow of immersion, sprinkling was allowed, because baptism began to be considered essential to salvation.

Pouring was allowed in the eighth century in cases of necessity to be valid by a decision of Pope Sthephen III, and it was not until the year 1311 that dipping or sprinkling were declared to be indifferent, which was done by the Legislature, in a council at Ravenna.

I might go on to quote from historians, who all seem united in one common expression, viz., that sprinkling or dipping is of a much later date than immersion. The relics of baptisteries which are now standing, and known to have been of ancient date, are so many monuments in favor of immersion.

Indeed, I know of no institution of God

that comes to us supported by a greater amount of evidence of its divine character, than that immersion is the only scriptural baptism.

Having fully settled the question in my mind as to what constitutes baptism, I began to doubt whether I had been right in my views as to its proper subjects; for in the investigation of the mode, I necessarily glanced at the subjects of baptism. I had believed that there were three classes of subjects—penitents, believers, and infants.

The first I had founded on Acts 2 : 38. "Repent and be baptized every one of you," &c. This error, I perceived, arose from my viewing their repentance in a sense which did not include saving faith. The 41st verse corrected my mistake. "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized." Their *gladly receiving the word*, implies faith.

This left me but two classes of subjects, believers and infants. As to the former, there is no controversy. The latter only, claimed my attention. The subject, there-

fore, was narrowed down to a single point, *Ought infants to be baptized?*

I judged as ministers of the gospel baptized in the name, so also must they baptize by the authority of Jesus Christ, and that the gospel should contain their credentials.

I turned to my text which contains our commission. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. I reasoned—are not infants a part of all nations? Yes. Then ought we not to baptize them? But according to the order of the text, we ought to teach first, those whom we baptize. But infants cannot be taught; therefore they are not included in this commission. I then examined the parallel text, Mark 16: 15, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," &c. I said to myself, infants are creatures; but did our Lord intend that the gospel should be preached to them? Certainly not: for he adds—"He that believeth and is baptized," &c. It follows therefore, as infants cannot believe, nor be taught, so the Master did not commission his servants to baptize them.

I understand the commission thus:—"Teach all the gospel who can be taught, and baptize all that truly believe; but infants cannot be taught, therefore you are not to baptize them."

Infant baptism then, is not in the commission given to the ministers of Christ. Of this I am certain. Nothing can be plainer. So I decided, and so I believe.

Still I reasoned that if it belonged to Christ's kingdom, its enactment must be somehow or somewhere recorded. I searched the New Testament for one precept, but could find none.

I then looked for inferential proof. I recollected that this was the kind of evidence by which we proved female communion; namely, women were baptized, and as such, they had a right to the sacrament of the Lord's supper. I thought inference equally clear for infant baptism would satisfy me.

I turned to Mark 10: 14. "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven." I had no evidence that this passage had any allusion to baptism. The

children were brought to Christ not to be baptized, but to be blest; and when Christ had prayed for them and blessed them, they went away, as they came, unbaptized. Mr. Scott says that the reason why they were not baptized was, because they had been circumcised. But had not all the male disciples of Christ been circumcised?

It is not contended that these children were baptized, or brought to Christ for that purpose; but that the phrase, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," implies, that they were the proper subjects of baptism; that the kingdom of heaven means either the world of future glory, or the gospel church; that if they are the proper subjects of the former, they must be of the latter.

But query—Are infants the proper subjects of the kingdom of glory? If so, they are holy, and of course the doctrine of human depravity cannot be true. But we all believe that infants are unholy, and as such they are not fit for heaven, and can no more be admitted into that holy place than we, without a change of heart. Therefore infants, with the natures with which they

were born into this world, are not the proper subjects of the heavenly world.*

Again. Are they the proper subjects of Christ's kingdom on earth? If so, are they not the subjects of the laws, and privileges of that kingdom?

What laws can infants be the subjects of, and what privileges can they enjoy? Answer. None. They may be baptized, and they may partake of the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, which they ought to do, if they are members of the church. Hence infant communion is almost, or quite, as old as infant baptism. But is all this obeying the laws and enjoying the privileges of the kingdom of Christ? I think not.

I see then no evidence that infants are the proper subjects of either the kingdom of grace, or glory. The word "*such*" in the text, I do not understand to express *identity*, but *comparison*. The context plainly shews it. "And Jesus called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them, and

* Still I believe that all who die in infancy are saved. But not because they are naturally holy. I trust that through the infinite benevolence of God, as they have never actually sinned, so the merits of Jesus will be unconditionally applied to regenerate and save them.

said, verily, verily I say unto you, except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." No one supposes that Christ meant to teach that we must shrink into the size and age of little children by humbling ourselves as little children. Consequently, in that passage where Christ says, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein," he would teach us that adults must receive the kingdom of God in that humble, meek, and depending temper, which will make them appear *like* or *as* little children. So we believe that Christ uses the word "*such*" as a term of comparison. Hence this passage does not appear to have any thing to do with baptism, either directly or indirectly.

The next passage to which I looked is found 1 Cor. 7 : 12—14. "Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy."

What holiness? It is either moral, ceremonial, or civil. It could not be moral ho-

liness, for holiness is not hereditary. It could not be ceremonial holiness, for the ceremonial law was abolished. It follows then, that it must be civil holiness,— these children being the pure and legitimate offspring of the holy institution of matrimony; and hence the true sense of the text evidently is— Else were your children illegitimate, but now are they legitimate. I ask again, what has this to do with baptism?

I next inquired if it could not be inferred from what the scriptures say of the baptism of whole householders?

At Phillipi there were two households baptized— Lydia's; Acts 16: 13, and the jailor's, verse 33. Lydia's household comprised all who were first baptized within the boundaries of Europe, and the jailor's, the second company of baptized individuals. This company Paul and Silas left at the prison when they went back and entered the house of Lydia. Here "they saw and comforted the brethren." What brethren? Were they not those believing individuals whom they baptized in the family of Lydia?

Dr. Whitby on this passage, says:—

"And when she and those of her household were instructed in the Christian faith, in the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized, and her household."

The assembly of divines in their annotations and note on this text say, that "Paul and Silas entered into the house of Lydia doubtless to confirm them in the faith, which they had preached to them. Lydia and hers *hearing* of their miraculous deliverance, could not but be comforted and confirmed in the faith." These testimonies from Pedo-baptists show that there is nothing to be drawn from this, in favor of infant baptism.

As to the jailor's household, I could find no infants there. It is said that the apostles spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. Mark ye—they spake the word of the Lord "to *all* that were in his house." Would they speak the word of the Lord to infants? Certainly not; but they spake the word to all that were in his house. It follows then that there were no infants in his house.

And hence 34th verse says, "that when

he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced believing in God with all his house." As Matthew Henry says, "the voice of rejoicing, with that of salvation, was heard in the jailor's house. *He rejoiced believing in God with all his house.* There were none in his house that refused to be baptized, and so make a jar in the ceremony; but they were unanimous in embracing the gospel, which added much to their joy."

Acts 8: 4, 5—8, we are informed of the baptism of Crispus and his household. But it is said that he "believed on the Lord with all his house." Hence they were all believers, and no infants.

The next is the household of Stephanas. 1 Cor. 1: 16. Of this household Paul says, ch. 16: 15, "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia." Fruits of what? The ministry of the word by which they believed, and were rendered the proper subjects of baptism.

Of this household Paul further adds, "that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." To whom will

this apply? Not to infants. We know that none but adults could administer to the wants of the poor persecuted followers of Jesus.

The household of Cornelius, Acts x. Here is the formation of the first Christian church among the Gentiles; and as such we should look to it as a model church. But what is the sum of the whole history bearing upon this question? It is simply this: 1. Peter preaches to them. 2. The Holy Ghost falls upon them. They receive it and believe; and, 3. They are baptized.

Now if the infants of those who believed were also to be admitted into the pale of the visible church of Christ, the apostle omitted a very important item in giving to the gentile world a model for a Gospel church. There were doubtless many families present to hear Peter, who were converted to God under his ministry, and yet after all there was not an infant baptized, nor a single hint given to that effect.

Surely Pedo-baptist missionaries in heathen lands do not follow Peter's example.

From their journals we find that they as regularly baptize the children of their converts as they do the converts themselves. But why Peter neglected this branch of his duty I cannot conceive, unless he were a Baptist, and had no confidence in infant baptism. Confidence did I say? I doubt whether he had ever heard of such a thing. Ay, more. I seriously doubt whether he had ever thought of such a thing. I am sure I never should if I had never heard any more about it than what is taught in the Bible.

Again, I looked for some intimations which might favor infant baptism in Acts 2. But I found that all who were baptized on the day of Pentecost were believers. 1. They were pricked to the heart, and said, &c. 2. They were required to repent, &c. 3. "Then they that gladly received the word were baptized." 4. "They continued steadfast in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

But did not the apostle hint at the baptism of infants, when he said "the promise

is to you and your children?" I think not, For to what "promise" does he refer? Answer. The promise of the Holy Ghost, which infant children are incapable of receiving. But a cursory view of his discourse makes this evident.

The Apostle's exhortation teaches that upon their repentance and baptism they should receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. "For the promise," says he, "is unto you and your children—even as many as the Lord our God shall call." The promise, then, can only be claimed by such as repent and are baptized, having been called by the Gospel. The *children* mentioned are such as can repent, and hence the term does not mean infants; but *posterity*. The promise is recorded in Joel 2:28. And the children are those mentioned in Acts 2: 17, 18. "Your sons and your daughters, young men, servants and handmaids."

One more case. We learn in the eighth chapter of Acts, that Philip, one of the first deacons of the church at Jerusalem, became the instrument of a revival of religion that moved the city of Samaria. So general was

the work, that it is said that "the people with one accord gave heed unto the things that Philip spake," &c. And that "when they believed, they were baptized both men and women."

Strange, indeed, that Philip should have neglected the children. If he did not, it is equally singular that Luke omitted the mention of it. He says he baptized both men and women. Why not children, also? Then it would have read, "Baptized men, women and children." I am satisfied why the word children was not added; and so I think every honest man must be who examines this subject, and draws his proofs from the holy scriptures.

I thus went through the New Testament scriptures, and asked, where is infant baptism to be found? And echo answered, Where? It was not there, neither in precept, example, intimation, nor inference, as I could see.

Pedo-baptists admit the silence of the New Testament upon infant baptism. But this silence, they say, is one of the strongest arguments in favor of its truth. They say

that baptism is substituted in the place of circumcision, and that all believers are under the Abrahamic covenant. Now as children were interested in that covenant under the law, so must they also be under the gospel, unless the gospel states to the contrary. The gospel being silent upon that subject, makes it sure that infant children are to receive the substitute of circumcision, namely, baptism. In this whole statement I find the premises are assumed. They are not proved, neither can they be proved. What then becomes of the conclusions drawn from them? I was led to this decision by an examination, critically, for the first time in my life, of the Abrahamic covenant. It is recorded in Gen. 17. This covenant embraces, 1. God's promise to Abraham, that he should be the father to many nations—and of kings—that he would be his God, and the God of his posterity, to whom he promises to give the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession.

2. This covenant was conditional;—which condition, he and his posterity must comply with in order to a fulfilment of the

promise, "Thou shalt keep my covenant, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee. Every man-child among you shall be circumcised."

In order to ascertain whether we are under the Abrahamic covenant, and that baptism is the substitute for circumcision, I inquired:—1. What part of the law of circumcision as applicable to baptism is still in force? The rite itself is abolished. Here we all agree. But what in reference to the law of circumcision is binding?

Does it include for its substitute the same classes of subjects, viz.—Infant children, slaves and domestics, whether adults or infants, believers or unbelievers, and finally none but males? Does it require us to baptize our children precisely at eight days old, under the penalty of breaking the covenant? What is the practice of the whole Pedobaptist world? Do they not baptize their infants at any age, and of both sexes—adult slaves and domestics not at all, except by their own request as believers? Why

depart from this law? Is not the gospel silent upon this subject, and does not this silence imply, according to their own argument, that it is still binding?

2. What was the design of circumcision? I instituted this inquiry to ascertain if baptism answers the same design. For surely it ought, if believers are under the Abrahamic covenant. 1. The first design of it was to form a national church, the nucleus of which was in the family of Abraham. It was a rite by which persons became entitled to all its blessings and privileges, which, as promised in Genesis 17th chapter, were principally of a temporal nature. I need only to ask, is this the design of baptism? We know it is not. 2. Circumcision was designed to prefigure the necessity of regeneration. Rom. 2 : 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly; * * and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Gal. 4 : 15. Col. 2 : 11.

This rite, then, when applied to infants, was designed to show the *want* of a new

heart, and not the actual possession of it. But baptism does not teach the *necessity* of the new birth; it is the "outward and visible sign of the inward, and spiritual grace" already received, and must be inapplicable to all infants, unless we regard it as regeneration, as some Pedo-baptists do, in which they are consistent, though the doctrine itself is absurd.

3. The sign of circumcision was designed to be a seal of the righteousness of faith, Rom. 4: 3. It was a seal to the doctrine of justification by faith alone. It was intended to perpetuate this glorious doctrine,—that there was a substitute for the law of works or perfect obedience as a condition of the sinner's justification. It was the seal of this blessed truth. It preached it until the gospel day, every time this rite was administered. It was not the condition of justification, for Abraham was justified when in uncircumcision. It was not the badge of its profession; but it was a seal to its truth and perpetuation.

Is baptism the seal of the doctrine of justification by faith? Answer. It is not.

Christ has sealed the doctrine in his own person and ministry. Circumcision sealed it until Christ came. To circumcise after Christ's ministry had been enjoyed, was a tacit denial of Christ. It was a refusal to admit the truth of Christ's ministry, and a going back to the law, and bearing its heavy yoke, from which Christ makes his people free. Hence Paul says, Gal. 5 : 2, 3, "If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Such have nothing to do with the gospel. He has more confidence in this bloody rite than he has in the words of Jesus Christ. If baptism be the substitute of circumcision, then it must be the seal of the doctrine of justification by faith. But why have this seal when we have the thing for which it was instituted? Has not Christ sealed this truth in his life, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, and his preached gospel? Is baptism more significant than all this? I challenge the Christian world to find a single passage that intimates that baptism is the seal of

the righteousness of faith. where then is the evidence that baptism is substituted for circumcision?

But it is said that we are still under the Abrahamic covenant. We will suppose for a moment that we are. If so, those children who were circumcised previous to the institution of the ordinance of baptism needed not to be baptized in order to become members of the gospel church, because they had fulfilled the condition of that covenant in their circumcision; and as baptism is designed for the same purpose, its administration to all such would not only be unnecessary but improper. It would be the same as baptizing a person twice, each of which being according to the divine institution.

Yet all John's subjects had been circumcised. All Christ's disciples had been circumcised. All the males of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost had also received that rite, and Paul, speaking of himself, says that he was circumcised the eighth day — and yet when he believed he was baptized. What, I could but ask my-

self, were all these persons baptized for, if they had already fulfilled the condition of the Abrahamic covenant? The truth is, I have concluded that believers under the gospel are not under this covenant, but as St. Paul says, Heb. 8: 6, "a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."

I see then nothing in the promise of the Abrahamic covenant—nothing in the law of circumcision—nor in the design of the institution, that intimates that baptism is to be its substitute, and withal I am well satisfied that believers are not under the Abrahamic covenant.

If we were disposed to turn the tables, we think it would not be a difficult task to show that the design of baptism is totally dissimilar from that of circumcision. But for want of time we will not pursue this idea.

Of one thing, however, I feel well assured, and that is, that these two institutions are as dissimilar one to the other in their design, as they are in their forms.

I think it can be satisfactorily shown from the New Testament, that baptism

never was designed to be a substitute for circumcision.*

In the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, by the unanimous voice of a council, comprising most if not all of the apostles and elders of the whole Christian church, and by the approbation of the Holy Ghost, *we see circumcision put down and no substitute proposed in its room.* In this whole account there is not the most distant hint that baptism was to be the practice in the room of circumcision.

In the twenty-first chapter of Acts, there is a case still plainer than the one recorded in the fifteenth chapter. When Paul made his last visit to Jerusalem, we are informed that the day after his arrival he went in unto James, and all the elders were present. Before these he rehearsed what wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry. And when they heard it they glorified the Lord. But one of them remarked, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of the Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the law; and they are informed of thee, that thou

* See page 59.

teachest all the Jews that are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children."

Here is a case directly in point. Paul is charged with teaching his Jewish converts to neglect the circumcising their children; but in case he taught them to baptize in its room, was he not called upon in the most imperious manner in self-defence to have declared it? But did he? No. His total silence on that occasion comes to my mind with all the weight of positive evidence, that no such practice was then in existence.

Where then is the evidence for infant baptism? It is not in the New Testament. It is not in the Old Testament. Nor is it in the Old and New Testaments if taken both together. Where then is the proof? The Roman Catholic church may answer, but revelation is silent.

I am quite sure it is not an institution of Christ, that it was not practised by his apostles, nor during the apostolic age;—that it is an institution of man, originating in false views of the design of baptism itself, and was not known in the Christian

church until the latter part of the second century, or the beginning of the third. I fully believe with Martin Luther, that infant baptism "cannot be proved by the sacred scriptures, that it was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles." I know it has been said, that Irenaeus states that "the church received a tradition from the apostles to administer baptism to little children, or infants." This would be coming pretty near to it. For Irenaeus was a disciple of Polycarp, and Polycarp was a disciple of John the Evangelist; but Dr. Gill has spoiled this argument by challenging the whole literary world to produce such a passage from the writings of Irenaeus. It was afterwards acknowledged that Origen, of the third century, and not Irenaeus of the second, was the writer intended.

Tertullian, of Africa, in the latter part of the second, or beginning of the third century, is supposed to be the first writer who makes any mention of infant baptism. He wrote a book against the indiscriminate baptism of minors. He contends that it is

most expedient to be regulated by the disposition and age of the person to be baptized. He says, "Let them come while they are growing up, let them come and learn, and let them be instructed when they come, and when they *understand* christianity, let them profess themselves Christians."

About the middle of the third century, or about forty years after Tertullian, the people in Africa had got baptism down to newborn babes.

Fidus, a country bishop, wrote to Cyprian of Carthage, to know whether children might be baptized before they were eight days old, for by his bible he could not tell. This question could not be decided by Cyprian without consulting a council of bishops. This council consisted of between sixty and seventy bishops, who finally decided, that as baptism was so necessary to save men, infants ought to enjoy the benefits of it as soon as they were born.

Here lies the secret of the origin of infant baptism. If men had not blended it with regeneration and made it regeneration itself, it had never been known. No argument

was then sought from the example or precept of Christ, or his apostles. It was wholly a matter of expediency, and was introduced and prevailed for the sake of the salvation of precious, immortal souls! Dr. Gill says, "No instance can be given of infant baptism, so early as of infant communion."

If it be asked, how could infant baptism ever have been begun in the church? the answer is, just as the worship of angels and saints, and praying to them, celibacy of the clergy, the observation of lent and other popish festivals, the worship of relics, the doctrine of purgatory and of transubstantiation, and the order of monks, were begun. For all these took their rise in the church about the same time with infant baptism and infant communion.

For the reasons above assigned I can but reject infant baptism as absurd, and ridiculous. It is also evil in its tendency. It prevents us from owning Christ in the way of his appointment. It is that by which anti-christ has extended his dominions over many nations. It is the foundation of na-

tional churches; and its influence is to lessen the authority of the word of God, which it makes void by human tradition.

Thus, my hearers, you have my reasons for changing my denominational relation, and you have heard the substance of the arguments which have made me a Baptist. I was sprinkled soon after I found the Lord, and I verily thought myself baptized. But I am now quite sure that in this I have erred. And as baptism is to answer a good conscience, for conscience sake I have been obliged to make this concession, and follow my Saviour. And I rejoiced when the hour came. I hailed it not as a cross. I complied with Christ's command, not as a task, but as one of the happiest and most privileged acts of my life.

In conclusion I would remark, that I have heard much said about my being precipitate in deciding these great questions. But I can assure the public that I have not been hasty in my conclusions. And I think that those who have heard me on this occasion, will at least admit that my decision on these points was never made without

much study and careful research to find out the truth. I can assure you, and all to whom it may concern, that I never announced myself a Baptist, until I fully and unequivocally believed their doctrine—that I never gave up the subject until, to my mind, infant baptism and sprinkling were annihilated, and nothing left as scriptural baptism but the immersion of believers.

It has been inquired, "Why did you not go to the most intelligent of your ministerial brethren and frankly state to them your doubt?" To this I reply, Why should I? Did I not understand all that could be said by Pedo-baptists? That ground was familiar to me, and I was certain that they could add nothing new. They might have given me advice, but surely they could not have given me arguments which I had not seen. I wanted arguments to counteract the Baptist argument, and not merely friendly advice.

Finally, I would say to all such as are inclined to censure me for dissolving my connexion with the church of my early choice—a church of which I have been a

member ever since I was seventeen years old, and in which I have been an ordained minister for nearly twenty years—I would just say: You may think me unwise, premature, or even acting under an infatuation, and in this you may be honest. I also claim to be equally so, in believing it to be my imperative duty to come out as I have done in defence of what I regard as the truth. Should even my motives be impugned, still an approving conscience will sustain me, and in the exercise of Christian love I hope to pray, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But to all such as honestly inquire, Why have you done this? I would say, consider well the statements to which you have attentively listened. And above all, take the holy scriptures, and "search and see" for yourselves.

And may God grant his Holy Spirit, by which we may understand His word, and be made wise unto salvation thereby, through faith in Jesus Christ. AMEN.

Note. In the 16th chapter of Acts we have an account of Paul's circumcising Timothy, upon whom this rite had never been before performed. For though his mother was a Jewess, yet his father was a Greek. But he had been baptized, because, in verse 1, he is called a disciple, and doubtless belonged to the Christian church. For he was "well reported by the brethren," &c.; upon which the apostle not only received him as a brother, but as a son in the gospel, and a fellow laborer in the ministry. Here then is a clear case of circumcision after baptism. How, then, could baptism be its substitute? The substitute must follow—not precede. Besides, if the rite of circumcision and the ordinance of Christian baptism be the same, then Paul by circumcising Timothy sanctioned the doctrine of baptizing the same person twice.

At a meeting of the Official Board belonging to St. Paul's Station, held on Friday evening, the 6th inst., it was suggested that I should prepare an address to my congregation, informing them of my change of Theological views; to meet which, the following was prepared and read to the Quarterly Meeting Conference, at their own request, on the next evening. Objections were strongly urged against its being read to the people, on the ground of its dangerous tendency. Though it was admitted that it did not contain the argument, yet to their minds there appeared a certain something about it which they feared might to many be more conclusive than the scriptural argument itself. These explanations are made and the "farewell letter" is published, with a view of answering a question, which has been so often asked, namely,—"Why was it, Br. Remington, that you left us so suddenly as not even to bid us *farewell?*"

FAREWELL LETTER TO MY LATE CHARGE.

My Dear Congregation—

Many of you have by this time probably heard that your Pastor has of late changed his theological views on some points, by which it is rendered necessary for him to resign his charge of this church and congregation, and to connect himself with another church, whose faith upon these points is in accordance with his own.

It is due to himself, and to the people to whom he has officiated, that some explanations should be made by which the cause of this change may be definitely known. And believing that none can be better qualified to discharge this duty than himself, the Official

Board has not only given him liberty so to do, but have expressed a desire to have him do it. For which he feels very grateful to them, and equally free to discharge the duty, as he is grateful for the privilege.

For persons to leave one church and unite with another, is an occurrence which often takes place both in the ministry and membership. But such an occurrence never ought to take place without being well considered. It is a serious matter, and ought not to be entered upon without a clear conviction of duty. Principle, not passion, should guide us in such an affair. So distinctly should we see every step of the ground over which we pass in going from one denomination to another, that our way should be perfectly clear to ourselves, and there should not be a lingering doubt as to the expediency and propriety of our course.

When a private member of a Christian church changes his denominational relation, he should be so enlightened himself as to the path of duty, as to be prepared on all proper occasions to give his reasons for so doing.

If this may be said of the private member of a church, how much more so of a minister who has the pastoral oversight of a church

and congregation. It is a duty he owes to the people—to the cause of Christ, for which he is supposed to act, and to himself that the ministry be not blamed.

What I am now doing is not the practical result of mere impulse; but I trust that I am guided by motives to glorify God, and advance the interests of His cause. I cannot but believe that the hand of God is in it, for he hath led me in a path that I knew not.

A few months ago, I should as soon have expected to have been a Roman Catholic as a Baptist. Not that my opinion of the latter people was the same as of the former. For I always believed them to be a good, spiritual people, though I thought bigoted, and exceedingly narrow in their Christian charity. This I supposed grew not exactly out of their hearts; but out of their creed, or out of their peculiar notions of the ordinance of baptism.

I acknowledge that I was strongly prejudiced against them; and so far did my prejudice extend itself, that I was almost ready to question their sincerity, and to look upon their rigid adherence to this point rather as a pretext by which to proselyte from other churches.

As to my own views of baptism, I scarcely believed at all in immersion. Indeed, my faith was so weak as to this mode, that I determined never, when I could possibly avoid it, to be its administrator. Secretly did I almost hope that such persons would go to the Baptists, where I thought they more properly belonged.

Still, occasionally I had to administer the ordinance, either in person or by proxy. For I generally found such persons incurable. If I talked them out of it, in a short time their convictions would return again; and then our hands were tied, and they must either leave our church and go to the Baptists, or remain dissatisfied, which generally injured their spiritual enjoyments. One class, however, I never would baptize. I mean those who were Baptists,— that is, believe that immersion was the only mode, or the only true baptism. Such I either convinced to the contrary, or advised to join the Baptists. My reasons for this course must be obvious. We as Methodists, believe baptism to be the door of admission into the visible church, and that no person has a right to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper who has not been baptized, it

being a privilege belonging exclusively to members of the visible church. Hence I always thought the Baptists consistent in what is called close communion. They believe that baptized Christians have a right to the communion, and none but such; and so also do the Methodist Episcopal Church believe. The only difference is, that the latter recognizes sprinkling equally valid as baptism with immersion, while the former contends that immersion is the only baptism, or in other words, that sprinkling or pouring is no baptism.

It happened a little more than two months ago, that several persons belonging to my congregation desired to be immersed. I could not refuse them, though I resolved not to immerse them myself. Accordingly I engaged a brother in the ministry to officiate for me. To confess the whole truth, I felt rather vexed than pleased. The weather was cold, and I thought it presumptuous to go into the river under such circumstances. There were eight candidates, all females; one of whom was very feeble in health, and I was requested to reserve her for the last, which request I readily complied with.

Suffice it to say, they went down into the

water one by one, and came straightway up out of the water, while I stood upon the shore a silent spectator. Soon, however, the scene began to melt my heart, and something seemed to kindly whisper, *this is the way to follow Jesus.* I felt that Jesus was present to own and sanction his ordinance. That Spirit that descended upon him at his baptism in the river Jordan, appeared to be hovering over us, and to change the whole aspect of the occasion in my mind to one of the most intense interest and delight. At length the last subject came; that feeble young woman went down into the water, and to my surprise she came up out of the water praising God. And every step to the shore she repeated her praises, declaring that the water was not cold, though the ice was swimming all around her. So warm was her heart with the love of God, that she was unconscious of the cold. My heart was humbled, and I felt to mingle my tears of gratitude with hers. The impressions made upon my heart that morning, I trust will continue while memory endures.

I went home and confessed to my family that I had spoken unadvisedly about the solemn and interesting ordinance of immersion,

and in my heart resolved never to do so again. Moreover I determined to examine more fully than ever I had done, the claims of the Baptists, thinking that by so doing my prejudices might become permanently softened, and my feelings more charitable towards them. Little did I think that such a result would follow as the sequel will show.

In the prosecution of this work, my bible was my text-book, my only authority. I read the arguments of the Baptists,—the arguments of Pedo-baptists I already understood. I therefore endeavored to weigh each on both sides, in the balances of divine truth. I think I was honest, and I am sure I earnestly prayed to be guided into the truth. I had not pursued the examination very far, before I became convicted, and as I advanced, those convictions increased, till at last, I was fully converted to the views which are entertained by the Baptist church on these points, by which they are distinguished as such. Or, in other words, I found myself in doctrine, a Baptist. I went over the ground again, and again, and came every time precisely to the same conclusions : viz. That there was no divine warrant for infant baptism in the word of God, and no

evidence of its being an institution of the gospel—that believers alone, are the proper subjects of that holy ordinance.

I also came to the conclusion, that sprinkling or pouring is an unscriptural mode of administering baptism, for which we have neither precept, nor example, nor the most remote inference in the New Testament. And that immersion being sanctioned by precept and example, is baptism. In short, that there is no baptism without it. Of course my opinion must be, that those who are sprinkled are not baptized—and as unbaptized persons have no right to the communion, none but such as are immersed ought to commune together.

With these views, my congregation will plainly see that I could not remain in the Methodist church, and be an honest man. I could not baptize infants, or sprinkle in the name of the Lord, and by his authority, when I felt perfectly satisfied that He never gave authority to do it. Nor could I virtually allow the validity of sprinkling or infant baptism, by an admission of such to the table of the Lord.

As therefore I must give an account of myself to God, so must I act for myself. Honor, duty, consistency, religion require me to re-

sign my pastoral charge over this church and congregation. I have served you as long as I could discharge, with fidelity, the duties imposed upon me by the Methodist Episcopal Church. I leave you with no unkind feelings. No. The members of this church and congregation have always treated me in the most gentlemanly and Christian-like manner. For all your kind attentions to me and mine, during my ministration among you, you have my sincere and hearty thanks. I shall always feel an interest for you, and not cease to pray that God may be with you, and bless you.

You all know that I have not sought to proselyte any to my new views. I have cautiously concealed all my thoughts from you with regard to this subject. I do not wish to divide or injure the church for whose spiritual welfare I have labored as their pastor. I love them no less now than ever. My advice to you is—"Be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace be with you and bless you." Commit your cause into His hands. "Give to the winds your fears," while you put your trust in God. And I trust that God will send you a faithful pastor, who will edify and build you up. I am soon to take up

my lot and inheritance with another tribe of our common Israel, and the recollection that we belong to the same common family, will always afford me no small degree of pleasure. And finally, the hope of meeting in that bright world of light and glory, where we shall see truth without error, and forever bask in its sunshine, is most cheering and delightful in the prospect. There I hope to meet you and the many thousands of the tribe of our Israel with whom I have been associated for more than twenty of the last years of my life.

Allow me to say in conclusion, that the step which I am now taking, is guided by principle. Had I one doubt as to its propriety, I would hesitate; but I have not. My mind is clear. I think I know my duty, and I shall cheerfully perform it. I am aware many may impugn my motives, and censure me for so doing; but if they do I shall still pray for them, I am sure of one thing, and that is, those who know me best will give me credit for moral honesty; and those who do not know the facts as they are, but deal in wholesale censure, as may be the case, will do it ignorantly, and I hope to put the most charitable construction upon what they may say. I know the power of prejudice,

and that many good men have much of it about them. Sad experience has taught me that lesson. I shall therefore remember the simple couplet,—

"That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me."

I love the Methodist church. I love her for her simplicity—for her zeal—for her unity of evangelical faith—for her experimental and practical piety. I love her for her revival spirit—for her zeal in the missionary cause—for her activity in every religious and benevolent enterprise. I love her for her institutions by which to fan up the flame of vital godliness in the church, and to keep her membership alive to God. Why should I not love her?—she has been a mother to me. She took me in youth and inexperience, and bore with my ignorance and mistakes. She has carried me in her arms, and always treated me with the utmost kindness and tenderness. Under God, I owe much to her instruction, forbearance, and fostering care. I leave her communion with deep emotion—I leave her ministry with feelings unutterable; for there are hundreds in her self-sacrificing ministry, to whom my heart has been wedded by many a "tie that binds

our hearts in Christian love." But duty directs—I must obey. My compliance is cheerful and voluntary. I leave a flourishing church to go to another equally so; and remember this is my last prayer while within the walls of the M. E. church, "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

S. RILLINGTON.

Lowell, Feb. 8, 1846.